

Shellee F. Davis

Continued from page 4

and opened the company's Cleveland branch office. The firm has six employees in Columbus and three in Cleveland.

Shellee Davis recalls the many hats she wore in the business when she started. She sold, hauled and installed the equipment, she says. "A lot of my customers still don't know I own the business," she says, laughing.

Davis credits her family upbringing and background in social service as reasons she has success with cus-

tomers.

"Knowing how to deal with people means treating them with importance," she says. "Service means pushing 10 boxes not just to push 10 boxes, but to meet the customer's needs. We never take our customers for granted."

A slogan in her office reads, "If we don't please our customer, somebody else will." It must work, because Davis says the company has tripled its sales within three years.

The company offers free equipment training for the client because Davis feels it is important for customers to know how to operate their

machines to fullest capability. The company also has a full-service repair center and does on-site equipment maintenance.

"One of my goals is to be the most reputable office equipment dealer in Central Ohio," she explains. "Our general company philosophy is to generate lasting business relationships with our customers from sales and service to ongoing support. We are accomplishing this goal."

This commitment through the years will be Britt's lifeline in the midst of failing enterprises, recessions and rapidly changing technologies, she says.

"Many times, the opportunity to present our products and bid competitively often leads to successful business relationships," she adds.

Davis was named 1990 Minority Business of the Year award winner by the Columbus Regional Minority Suppliers Development Council. She was also awarded as the 1991 Entrepreneur of the Year award sponsored by Ernst Young, Merrill Lynch and Inc. magazine.

Britt has nearly 700 customers, including American Electric Power, Anheuser-Busch, Columbus Public Schools, Ohio State University, and the state of Ohio. Her company is endorsed by the Columbus Bar Association as the facsimile vender of choice for attorneys, and Britt has been recognized by Xerox since 1988 as one of the top 500 revenue-producing dealers nationally.

Davis balances her career with her

Davis is involved in many community activities. In July, she spoke at the Urban League's national conference.

roles as a wife and mother. In fact, her company is named after her 5-year-old daughter, Brittany.

"My husband has been very supportive of my career ventures," she says, "as well as being helpful in nurturing and raising the children." Her son Reggie, now 3 years old, was born eight hours before her first facsimile machine sale.

"It gets frustrating," she confesses. "You go from one thing to another. You pack the kids' lunch, take them to school, pick them up, feed them dinner and put them to bed. I wish I could spend more time with them. That is another goal of mine."

Besides running her company, Davis is involved in many community activities, such as the Columbus chapter of Links Inc. She serves on the Columbus Speech and Hearing board and mentors youth and other budding entrepreneurs. In July, she spoke at the Urban League's national conference.

"I have always had a high energy level," she says. "I can't sit too long. There's always something to be done."

"It's like I tell my customers: 'My reputation rides on your satisfaction. It is very important to me that I earn your business so that you and others will know that Britt is capable of doing the job.'"

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Making It

Growing businesses share their experiences...

The 10 finalists for the 1991 Small Business Person of the Year will be honored and this year's winner will be announced at the sixth annual Small Business Awards Program on Oct. 16.

Shellee Davis Dart Business Systems

Shellee Davis started her office product retail corporation in 1988 eight months pregnant and with no formal sales or management experience. Aided with a loan and encouragement from her aunt, she saw sales of over \$900,000 in 1990 and opened another office in Cleveland. Davis thinks Columbus is an excellent and unique city to start a business. "Columbus has a wealth of resources and business opportunities," she said, "and a wealth of challenges."



Kevin D. Williams Data Communications Equipment, Inc.

Kevin D. Williams of Data Communications Equipment, Inc. is especially pleased to be recognized as a Small Business Person of the Year finalist. "It makes all those years when I spent time doing community work as well as trying to get a business off the ground — evenings away from my wife and home — more worthwhile."



DCE, Inc. began carving out its niche in 1987 by designing and implementing wide area data communication networks. Williams says that DCE's products, while not the least expensive on the market, are the best.

Peter Stock Video Duplication Services

"There's no better place to do business than Columbus," says Peter Stock, of Video Duplication Services.



"Columbus companies are innovation-minded, which means opportunity for a company like ours, looking to do something new." He started his company in anticipation of the growing market for video tape duplication and used new technology to boost his business past the others who used slower, more conventional methods. Stock's success is even greater than the 80% per year sales increases show, because the price for his product has actually declined by more than 60% in that same period.

Larry Levine Impulse Wear

Larry Levine started his company, Impulse Wear, from his apartment. Often times, he says, a potential client would be puzzled to hear a dog barking in the background as they talked on the phone. Today, Impulse Wear employs 23 people and has sales of around \$400,000 a year. Levine markets his own licensed characters, the Fuzzballs, and they are quickly gaining international recognition. In addition, his company strives to develop and offer innovative t-shirt designs. His ambition is to become "the Hallmark Cards of sportswear." "We are often called an idea company," he says, "involved in creative marketing."



Joe Ciolek Alliance Corporate Resources

Joe Ciolek considers his strongest achievement to be the solid "earned partnership" his business has with his customers. Being a finalist reinforces that partnership. "Being recognized as a small business finalist means to me that some of the ideas and a great deal of the effort provided by the people who make up Alliance are working," he says. Ciolek's company, Alliance Corporate Resources, Inc., provides financing for computers and other information systems.

ANDREWS OFFICE PRODUCTS CAPITOL HEIGHTS, MD (K)

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THE DAILY REPORTER

Tuesday, September 24, 1991

Vol. 145 -- No. 246

Established 1896

Davis receives honor as top regional retailer

By KATHLEEN O'NEILL
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

The Minority Business Development Council (MBDC), an affiliate of the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, kicked off its week-long tribute to minority business Monday by naming Shellee F. Davis, Britt Business Systems Inc., the Regional Retailer of the Year.

The award is presented annually by the U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDC incorporated the presentation into its festivities for national Minority Enterprise Week (MED Week), which runs through Friday.

Davis is one of six retailers recognized nationally for her contribution to the retail industry.

"The U.S. Department of Commerce gives the award to one individual in each of its six regions," said Regina Edwards, the MBDC business development specialist. "Columbus is in the Chicago region, which covers Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Kentucky."



Shellee F. Davis

"Shellee Davis is a living success story," said Chamber President Jon York as he presented the award. "She has an inner desire to succeed."

Davis founded Britt Business Systems, 415 E. Broad St., in Jan-

uary 1988. The company distributes Xerox and Panasonic office equipment.

"We market facsimile machines, electric typewriters ... and are the main Xerox copier agent for small- to medium-sized businesses in the downtown area," she said.

"I am very proud to be a representative of Columbus, Ohio and receive this award," Davis said.

As a woman minority business owner, Davis believes she can set an example for other minorities.

"I believe we must strive for all minority businesses to be in the mainstream of the business world. Minority business soon will not be set apart from others. Good minority businesses should be the rule, not the exception," she said.

Since Britt's beginning, the company has been recognized annually as one of Xerox's top revenue producers. "We were singled out from over 500 businesses," Davis said.

Her success enabled Davis to

open a Cleveland office in June 1988. "We employ six people in the Columbus office and three in Cleveland," she said.

Davis attributes the expansion to quality products, competitive prices and excellent customer service.

"Because I am a minority and female, I have to do everything better," she said.

Davis will be honored at the Minority Business Awards reception from 5 to 7 p.m. today at the Chamber, 37 N. High St.

MED Week activities continue Wednesday from 8 to 10:30 a.m. at the Minority Empowerment Forum held at the Garfield Center for the Performing Arts.

"True minority businesses development is alive and well in Columbus as a result of companies like Britt Business Systems," York said.

Davis also is one of 10 finalists for the Chamber's annual Business Person of the Year Award.

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"Columbus most resembles time travel...a kind of back-to-the-future with the best of small-town America in a modern metropolitan setting, minus most of the nightmarish aspects of urban life."

Barron's

INFORMATION SYSTEMS/TECHNOLOGY
continued from page 4..

U.S. Department of Commerce Honors Britt Business Systems



Jonathan L. York, right, President of the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, awarded the U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Minority Retailer of the Year Award to Shellee Davis of Britt Business Systems in Columbus. Davis started her office product retail corporation in 1988 and opened a second office in Cleveland last year.

Time Warner and LiTel to Test PCNs--Columbus will be among four cities where Time Warner Cable Group will test methods of implementing personal communications networks using existing cable and fiber-optic networks for transmitting calls. LiTel Telecommunications Corp. based in suburban Columbus, is also testing PCN concepts with business customers.

Trash a Success--Dresser-Rand Steam Turbine, Motor & Generator Division recently applauded Columbus Solid Waste Reduction Plant as a "showcase for the city and the nation." In eight years of operation, the plant has burned 3.5 million tons of solid waste and has been named the most successful municipal operated plant among the 135 plants in the nation.

Ross Labs Introduces Survanta--Columbus-based Ross Laboratories has announced a new drug to treat infant respiratory distress syndrome which affects about 50,000 premature infants each year. The drug, called Survanta, is extracted from cow lung

CALL POST

VOL 76 NO 39

OHIO'S BLACK NEWSPAPER

28

RETAILER OF THE YEAR



AT A NEWS CONFERENCE on Monday, Sept. 23, Britt Business Systems was named Minority Regional Retailer of the Year by the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce. (From left to right) Amy Moellentamp, sales associate; Shellee Davis, president of Britt Business Systems; and Jim Johnson, sales associate share plaque. See story and additional photo on page 6A. (PHOTO By AMOS LYNCH JR.)

AWARD PRESENTATION



AWARD PRESENTATION -- Jonathan York, president of the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, presents award plaque to Shellee Davis, president of Britt Business Systems, as Keith Knights, director of the Minority Business Development Center, looks on. Britt Business Systems Inc. was recently named the Minority Regional Retailer of the Year by the U.S. Department of Commerce. (PHOTO By AMOS LYNCH JR.)

Britt Business Systems named Retailer of Year

The awards continue to flow for a major Columbus minority distributor of Xerox facsimile and copier products. Shellee Davis, president of Britt Business Systems, was named Minority Regional Retailer of the Year by the U. S. Commerce Department for its Chicago Region on Monday, Sept. 23. Davis' firm markets Xerox copiers and facsimile machines as well as a Panasonic electronic typewriter and related products.

By now, much of the Britt story has become very familiar to the Columbus small business community.

She was eight months pregnant when she started her firm in January 1988. Her "Britt child" was born on Feb. 10, 1988. Since its first year of operation, Britt Business Systems has added five employees, including a service department, and has tripled its sales. Britt has also received the 1991 Entrepreneur of the Year Award from Ernest & Young and Merrill Lynch and has been named finalist in the Sixth Annual Small Business Award Program. The winner of that competition will be announced on Oct. 16.

NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE CONFERENCE

Challenge of African American Entrepreneurship

Motivated by the desire for financial independence — not to mention the threat of corporate downsizing or the inability to break through the corporate “glass ceiling” — a growing number of African Americans are considering the possibility of business ownership.

But the number of would-be entrepreneurs is still relatively small because most professionals find it difficult to assume the risks of business ownership.

On Tuesday, July 23 at 3:45 p.m., the National Urban League will

sponsor a panel discussion to examine ways to encourage more professionals to take the entrepreneurial plunge.

Titled “The Dilemma of African American Entrepreneurship,” the panel will be moderated by Dr. Julianne Malveaux, an economist at the University of California Institute for Industrial Relations, and contributing editor for *Essence* magazine.

Shelle Davis, president of Britt Business Systems Inc., a Columbus, Ohio-based firm, and William Pikard, chairman and CEO of Regal Plastics Co. in Detroit, will join Dr.

Malveaux to talk about the problems they had to overcome when they started their businesses.

During its national conference, the Urban League will sponsor a number of other panel discussions on related topics. They include:

- “Contemporary Corporate Dynamics: Breaking the Glass Ceiling,” Monday, July 22, 3:45 p.m.
- “The Resurgence of Racism and the Future of Economic Equity,” Tuesday, July 23, 10:15 a.m.

- “Are We Corporate Professionals Who Just Happen to be Black, or Blacks Who Happen to be Corporate Professionals?” Tuesday, July 23, 10:15 a.m.
- “What is the Black Corporate Professional’s Commitment to the African American Community?,” Tuesday, July 23, 3:45 p.m.

For more information about these and other National Urban League Conference events, call the local branch at (404) 659-1150. ■

Opportunity for blacks ripe, Urban League speaker says

COX NEWS SERVICE

ATLANTA — America is producing more opportunities for entrepreneurs, and more blacks can be expected to take advantage of those openings, a Detroit executive said at the National Urban League's conference last week in Atlanta.

"This is one of the finest hours for black entrepreneurs," said William F. Pickard, chairman of Regal Plastics Co. and the owner of several McDonald's restaurants.

The downsizing of large American businesses creates niches for small businesses, giving them chances to supply products and services that big businesses no

longer want to provide for themselves, Pickard said after a seminar on African-American entrepreneurship.

For example, he said, auto manufacturers often decide to begin buying particular parts, such as the plastic ones Regal makes, from outside sources. "I can make a widget a lot cheaper than General Motors can," Pickard said.

But problems persist, another speaker said. "Racism and sexism are endemic in our society," said Shellee F. Davis, president of Britt Business Systems Inc. of Columbus. "As a black female, I was not taken seriously until I started taking (away) their business."

national urban league

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
& CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

July 29, 1991

Ms. Shellee F. Davis
President
Britt Business Systems, Inc.
415 Broad Street - Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Ms. Davis:

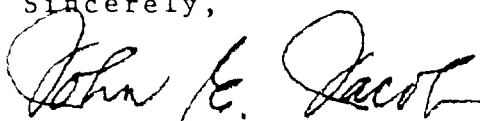
The National Urban League deeply appreciates your participation in the recently concluded 1991 conference in Atlanta. The annual National Urban League Conference is a time to look toward the future, to the strategies and programs to assist African Americans in achieving economic and racial parity. Your participation helped us focus attention on the relevant issues and the means to achieving parity.

As a token of appreciation for your participation, we have enclosed a copy of the audiotape of the session you addressed.

Again, thanks for your leadership and dedication in participating in the 1991 National Urban League Conference.

With deepest gratitude.

Sincerely,



John E. Jacob
President and
Chief Executive Officer

JEJ:jrs

Emerging Entrepreneur

Award Recipient

Name and title: Shellee F. Davis, president

Company name: Britt Business Systems Inc.

Address and city: 415 E. Broad St., Columbus

Nature of business: Office equipment retail sales organization; authorized dealer for Xerox and Panasonic.

Company history: In 1987, Xerox Corp. was looking to expand their dealership base in the Columbus area and wanted to recruit a racially diverse dealer organization. Since then, sales topped \$850,000 in 1990.



Shellee F. Davis, president of Britt Business Systems Inc. (BBS) can trace a different path to the top of the office equipment sales world than most of her competitors. However, the results of her journey are indisputable.

After earning a bachelor's degree in sociology from Wright State University and a master's in criminal justice from Rutgers University, the business world may have seemed like an unlikely destination for her.

Nonetheless, in 1990 BBS was ranked the top revenue producing Xerox dealer out of 60 dealers in the Midwest region after only three years of business. BBS also has been recognized by the Columbus and Cleveland Chamber of Commerce's Regional Minority Development Supplier Council's 1990 Minority Business of the Year.

"I was in the right place at the right time to be considered as a Xerox dealer," she said. "Plus, Xerox was interested in diversifying their dealership by bringing on a minority dealer. I took the opportunity and ran with the challenge."

She met her first challenge by selling her first facsimile machine from a hospital bed after delivering a baby.

Since the birth of her baby and her business, sales have grown to around \$850,000 in 1990. Davis projected sales of about \$1.5 million for 1991.

"I want to be first and foremost in the minds of people looking for office equipment," said Davis, who credits her family for financial and emotional support. "I want to become the household name of office equipment."

All of Davis's customers can utilize free training on their equipment and the on-site service center. Her clients include American Electric Power; Huntington National Bank; The Ohio State University; and the State of Ohio. BBS also has been endorsed by the Columbus Bar Association as the facsimile vendor choice for attorneys.

"We have a sincere approach to selling and wanting customers to be satisfied," she said. "We don't just sell boxes. We try to find solutions to customer's office equipment needs. Even if they don't buy from us, we want to give them the necessary information so they can find out what they need."

Shellee F. Davis
Britt Business Systems Inc.
Judges' comments:

Her company has gained a reputation for quality service and competing and beating out the other major competitors in the area. . . ranked top revenue-producing Xerox dealer in the Midwest region in 1990

What it takes to be an Entrepreneur.

The willingness to stand alone.
The confidence to challenge the conventional.
The unswerving commitment to a vision.
The passion for being on top.
The courage to do as you dream.

The Entrepreneurial Services Group at Ernst & Young, dedicated to providing integrated business and personal advice to entrepreneurs, salutes the recipients of the 1991 Columbus Entrepreneur Of The Year Award.

Manufacturing/High Technology

David C. Wetmore
Goal Systems International Inc.

Wholesale/Distribution

Robert D. Walter
Cardinal Distribution, Inc.

Socially Responsible Entrepreneur

Leslie A. Bostic Ph.D.
Buckeye Boys Ranch, Inc.

Retail

G. Arthur Seelbinder
The Cooker Restaurant Corporation

Service

Christopher L. White
Mid-American Waste Systems, Inc.

Emerging Entrepreneur

Shellee F. Davis
Britt Business Systems, Inc.

Master Entrepreneur

R. David Thomas
Wendy's International, Inc.

Supporter of Entrepreneurship

Friedrich K. M. Bohm
NBBJ

THANKS TO OUR PATRONS

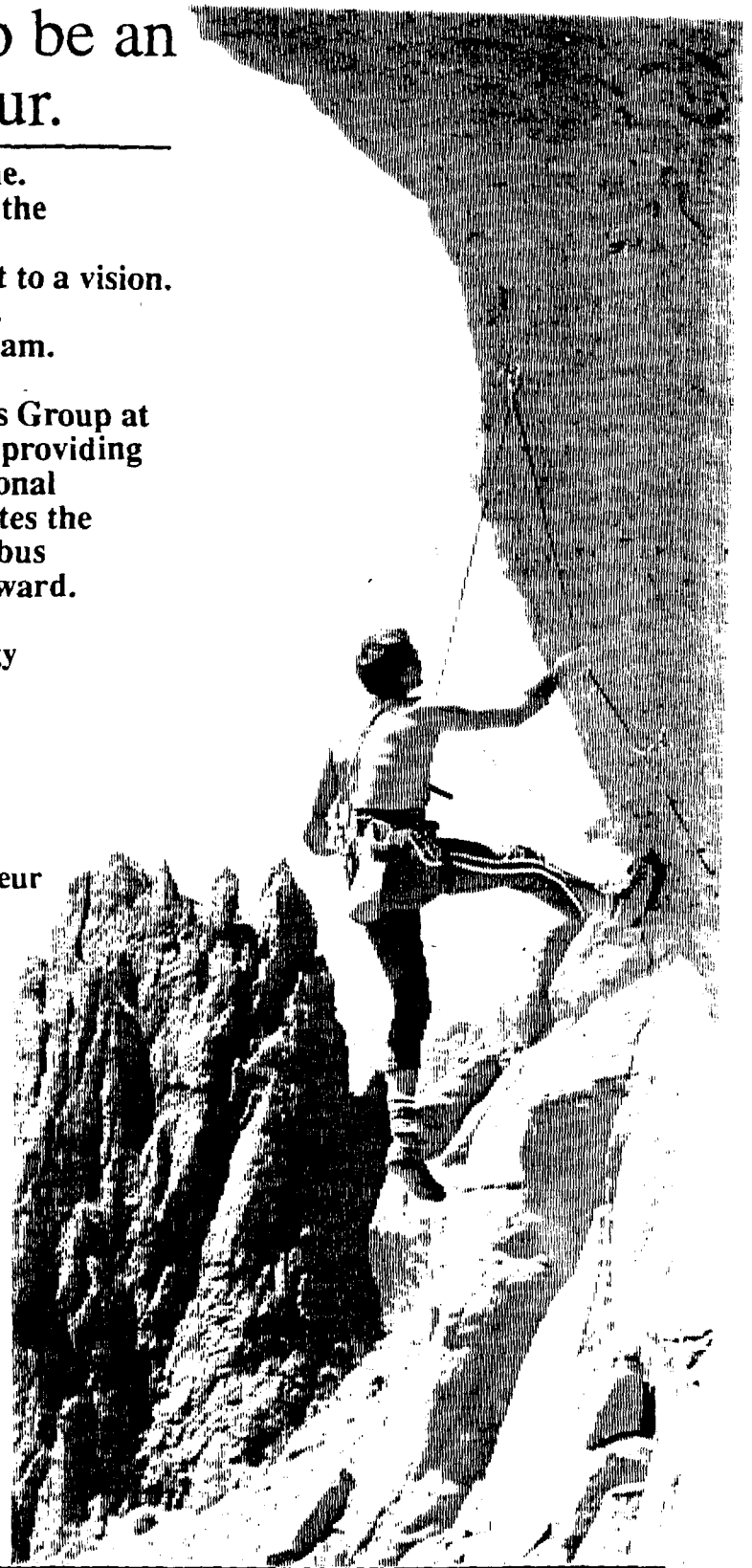
Banc One Capital Corporation
BancOhio National Bank
Bank One
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Cardinal Development Capital Fund/The Ohio Company
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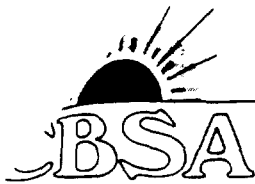
ERNST & YOUNG

Inc.

Merrill Lynch



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COUNCIL of BLACK STUDENTS
in ADMINISTRATION
1775 College Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210



April 16, 1991

Dear Ms. Davis,

The Council of Black Students in Administration is proud to inform you that you have been chosen as the New Venture Awardee for our Fifteenth Annual Black Business Awards Banquet. This award is given in recognition of black individuals who own and operate a successful business. Given the outstanding biography we received a couple of weeks ago, we felt you were the most deserving of this award.

In order for us to learn more about one another, a small get acquainted reception will be given and your presence would be greatly appreciated. The reception will be held on Tuesday, April 23, 1991, in the Faylor Lounge on the 3rd floor of the Ohio Union, 1756 N. High St.

Thank you very much for your time. We look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely yours,

Tanya L. Pullie
V.P., Operations

Britt Business Systems Wins CRMSDC's Minority Business of the Year Award

Britt Business Systems was named the 1900 Minority Business of the Year during the Informafair '90 banquet. The company, located at 415 East Broad Street in downtown Columbus, is owned and operated by Shellee F. Davis.

Britt Business Systems exclusively distributes Xerox business equipment. It also sells Xerox desktop copiers and complete supplies for all brands of fax machines. As an authorized Xerox Service Center, Britt Business Systems provides full service and maintenance for their entire product line.

Britt Business Systems is the only Xerox dealership owned by an African-American female. In accepting the Minority Business of the Year Award, Ms. Davis cited the need for minority and female-owned businesses to offer competitive pricing and quality service and products as a means to ensure the longevity of their business.

Ms. Davis, a graduate of Wright State University and the recipient of a master's degree from Rutgers University, opened her business in 1988. Her first fax machine sold was from her hospital bed, eight hours after the birth of her second child.

In 1989, Britt Business Systems also was recognized by the Xerox Corporation as the top revenue producing facsimile and typewriter dealer in the midwest. There are over 500 Xerox dealerships nationally.



Britt Business Systems Owner Shellee Davis and keynote speaker Joshua Smith



Surrounded by staff, Shellee Davis holds award presented to Britt Business Systems

1990 Corporate Member of the Year

Ohio Bell, an Ameritech Company, has been selected as this year's recipient of CRMSDC's 1990 Corporate Member of the Year Award. This recognition is given each year to a company that has aggressively pursued CRMSDC's goal of increasing opportunities for minority businesses.

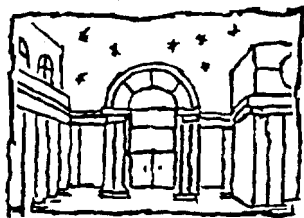
Having established an MBE program in the 1970's, Ohio Bell has a long history of commitment to minority businesses. The Match Maker Plus Concept was initiated by Ohio Bell and is responsible for actual awards during Informafair.

Robert Eubanks, Ohio Bell's representative to CRMSDC, has been an active member of CRMSDC's board of directors.



Ohio Bell's Robert Eubanks, Assistant Manager, Network and Neil Soeder, Assistant Vice President

HELPING
KIDS
DREAM



THE 1991
KING CENTER
ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

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LES WRIGHT
JAMES F. ZID
PASTOR JESSE WOOD

November 19, 1991

Something Wonderful
Harriette White
500 N. Nelson Road
Columbus OH 43219

Dear Ms. White:

As a member of the Campaign Planning Committee for the 1991 King Center Annual Campaign, I am excited to be a part of this fund-raising effort. I am particularly excited to be chairing the African American Owned Business Division of the campaign.

As a business owner, I have long been aware of the fact that community involvement is one of the keys to success. However, as an African American business owner, I feel that I have a special responsibility in the area of community support. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center represents an opportunity for us, Black business owners, to both invest in our community and invest in our culture.

Enclosed, please find a brochure describing the King Center and this year's campaign theme, "Helping Kids Dream". We are focusing on the thousands of children that are touched throughout the year by programs offered at the Center. More importantly, I have included a pledge card and would like to ask for your financial support in this campaign. Your investment will go directly to support the mission of the King Center and to help children dream.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have not already visited the King Center, I encourage you to come and tour this great institution and share in the pride and inspiration it offers.

Sincerely,

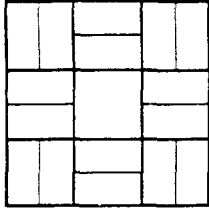
Shellee F. Davis
President
Britt Business Systems, Inc.

Enclosures

867 MT. VERNON AVENUE
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43203
(614) 252-KING

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CENTER



FOR NEW DIRECTIONS

TO: Presenters and Panelists
FROM: Sharon Sachs, Executive Director
RE: A Place to Start, May 4, 1991
DATE: April 16, 1991

Sharon

Thank you for your willingness to volunteer your expertise and knowledge by generously sharing your time in support of the third of our programs for African-American women. Our Center is pleased to have this opportunity to encourage women in their consideration of business ownership and self-employment.

Enclosed are several flyers for your use. Please call 461-6117 to obtain as many additional copies as you like.

In the next few weeks our Public Relations Specialist, Cindy Lansky, will be generating media coverage by radio, television and newspaper for A Place to Start. Please expect Cindy's calls, as she may invite you to be involved in some aspect of our promotional efforts.

If you are not scheduled as part of the networking lunch, but would like to attend, please call me or staff member Terri Wilson to let us know.

If you have materials for our display tables, please let us know. We'd like twenty-five copies, if possible.

Terri, Cindy and I look forward to working with you during these next few weeks.

Please prepare a 7-10 minute story for your part of the panel.

